ποιμένης τῶν προβατων μέγας, ἀρχιποίμενης

Αρχηγος

4

ποιμένης/ διδασκάλος Eph. 4. 11.

THE IVDGEMENT OF A MOST REVEREND AND LEARNED MAN FROM BEYOND THE SEAS, CONCERNING A THREEFOLD ORDER OF BISHOPS, WITH A DECLARATION OF CERTAINE OTHER WAIGHTIE POINTS, CONCERNING THE DISCIPLINE AND GOVERNEMENT OF THE CHVRCH.

THE JUDGEMENT
OF A MOST REVEREND
AND LEARNED MAN FROM
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ING A TRIENNIAL ORDER
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THE IVDGMENT OF A MOST REVEREND AND LEARNED MAN FROM BEYOND the seas, concerning a threefolde order of Bishops: with a declaration of certaine other waightie pointes, concercerning the discipline and gouernement of the church.

We must needes make three bishops. { 1 *Of God.* 2 *Of man.* 3 *Of the deuil.*

A Bishop ordained of God, or set vp by the law of God, doth declare nothing els but their calling, which by an other more speciall name, are called Pastoures, whome (saieth Luke) the holy Ghost hath appointed Bishops to feede the Church of GOD. And either of these names of Pastour or of Bishop, is proper to them in the newe Testament, whereby the Apostle doeth distinguish them from Apostles, Prophets, and Euangelists, which were callings to endure for a tyme, Ephes. 4. 11. and from Deacons, 1. Tim. 3. and Phil. 1. 1. for otherwise they

Esheto episcopon poykanein ten ecclesian tou theou.

are euery where called Elders, & Paule doth call his Apoſtleſhip a Deaconſhip. Rom.11.13. But they are called Biſhops in regard of the ſheepe committed vnto them, as though a man ſhould call them watchmen of ouerſeers.

Theſe now were one alone, as where any church had but one Paſtor, or more if the Church had more then one. And the meeting of them together ioyntly with their Elders, whom Paule calleth gouernours, of the other commō name called, was the Elderſhip. Their duetie was to attend on the worde and praier, both publikely and priuately, and in common to gouerne the Church, as appeareth by many places of Scripture.

ettreuſes Presbyte-ion.

That the ſame were ſubiect to magiſtrates, though prophane, appeareth not onely by the example of Chriſt the high Prieſt, and of the Apoſtles, but alſo by the expreſſe wordes of Paul, 1. Timoth.2. and Luke 12.13.

OF

OF THE BISHOP THAT *is of man.*

THe Biſhop that is of man, that is to ſay, brought into the Church by the alone wiſedome of man, beſides the expreſſe word of God, is a certain power giuen to one certaine Paſtour aboue his other fellowes, yet limited with certain orders or rules prouided againſt tyranny. They which did beare this office of biſhop, are called biſhops in regard of their fellow Elders and the whole clergie, as watchmen ſet ouer the clergie.

That this calling was not brought in by the word, it is manifeſt by that, that there is not to be found in the new Teſtament, ſo much as one ſyllable, whereby there may be the leaſt ſurmiſe of any ſuch thing. For although we doubt not, but all thinges ought to be done orderly in the lordes houſe, and therfore that ſome one ſhould be preſident in euery aſſembly, whom Iohn in the Reuelatiõ ſeemeth to call the Angell of the Churches. And Auſten calleth the moderator *Proeſtota*, yet this moderator of actiõs

of the Church, ſauyng this one thing, that he was the firſt in order in the cõpany; had no authority ouer his felows, neither did hee exerciſe any higher office. Therefore the author of the epiſtle to the Hebrewes, as Hierome noteth, doeth cal the whole company of the elders, gouernours; not any one certayne man. Such a one was Peter many times in the very aſſembly of the Apoſtles, of a great authoritie ſurely amongſt the Apoſtles, who were all otherwiſe equall, and yet he himſelfe one of the company of the Apoſtles, ſent by his companions to Samaria with Iohn, Act. 8. 14. and in the aſſembly giuing an account of his miniſtery, to thoſe which were of the Circumciſion, Acts 11. 2. But if any ſuch biſhoplike authoritie of any one aboue the reſt, as there was afterwardes, had bin then, ſurely the apoſtles would haue ſet down their names euen at that tyme, in their letters which they ſent from one to another, eſpecially ſeeing Paule in his epiſtle to the Philip. doth name biſhops in the plural number, and Deacons: or there ſhould haue bene at leaſt

Egoumenous. Hebr. 13.

leaſt ſome peculiar mention made of them. Which, ſeeing it is not done, it appeareth that amongeſt theſe gouerners, there was none in degree aboue their companions and fellow biſhops: but as occaſion ſerued, the Churches were gouerned by a fellowlike & equal authoritie, among the fellow-elders in their elderſhips, he onely going before the reſt, whoſe godlines and authoritie, the company did moſt allow of.

Epiphanius againſt the Arrians, defending the contrary opinion: namely, the biſhop ordained by man, as ordained by God, doth bring forth three reaſons to the contrary. Two as it were out of the word of God: the third out of the hiſtory of thoſe tymes. The firſt place is, 1. Tim. 5. 1. Rebuke not an Elder, &c. whereby he gathereth, that Timothie had ſome authoritie ouer the Elders, that is, the Paſtors of the church of Epheſus. But (be it ſpoké with the fauour of ſo woorthy a man) hee ſhould haue marked, that here an elder is called, he that is ſuch by age, not he that is a Paſtor, which is declared by the op-

Presbyteron me epeplexen.

poſition next following of yong men.

An other place is out of the ſame Epiſtle, Receyue not an accuſation agaynſt an Elder, the firſt of Timothie 5. 19. Whereby he gathereth, that the Elders were ſubiect to the Biſhops and tribunall ſeate. But who will graunt hym that Timothie was Biſhop of Epheſus. For the hiſtory will eaſily reiell that, which the fathers doe report as certayne. For no man can denie that Timothie was one that accompanied Paule, and therefore no biſhop aſſigned to any one certaine place, who was ſent one while to this place, an other to that, for the eſtabliſhing of the Churches: and finally, that he was an Euangeliſt, and not a biſhop of any one certayne flocke. I haue deſired thee (ſaieth hee) to abide at Epheſus, whileſt I went into Macedonia. And why ſo? namely, to looke to the Church which hee had begunne to eſtabliſh, vntill he were called for agayne, which he doth in the other epiſtle. What? and did the Apoſtle robbe the Epheſians of their Biſhop, without asking their church at

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the leaſt? Surely, when he went laſt to Ieruſalem, neuer mindyng to returne to Epheſus, eyther he would haue reſtored Timothie vnto them, or the Epheſians would haue required him agayne of the Apoſtle, when hee put them in minde of ſo great danger at hand: or if another were to be put into his roume, hee would haue made expreſſe mention in that his diuine Sermon. But he is ſayd to haue ſent for the Elders onely, and to haue warned them of the duetie belongyng to them all. Yet it need not ſeeme ſtraunge to any, that the Euangeliſt Timothie, a man indued with ſo many and ſo great giftes remainyng at Epheſus, did gouerne all thinges by his direction, as one in degree aboue the Elders, and by the Apoſtles authoritie appointed there for a tyme.

But let vs graunt Epiphanius more then this, that Timothie had the authoritie of the laying on of handes out of theſe woordes of the Apoſtle, Laye not handes ſodainely vpon any: Let vs graunt this too, that theſe duties belõged to the gouernors, yet we deny

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that Timothie could haue had any authoritie therefore, ouer the Elders of Epheſus, except he had bin an Euangeliſt. For Paule himſelfe Tim.4.14. doth ſhew ſufficiently that the laying on of the hands was done, in the name of the Elderſhip it ſelfe, not by the authoritie of any ſuperior. Now the reaſons of the ſame Epiphanius are theſe: Biſhops (ſaieth hee) begette the fathers of the Church, but Elders the ſonnes, in aſmuch as biſhops and not Elders ordained biſhops. But what is this els, then to aske to haue that which is in queſtion: for it may be and ought to bee anſwered, that the biſhops tooke that authoritie vpon them, without warrant of the word of God, and that the rule is falſe, which cõcerning this matter, doth attribute it to the Apoſtles, which may be ſhewed by the ordaining of Timothie by the Elderſhip. Againe, foraſmuch as election is the chiefe ground of church-offices, which dependeth of the voyces of the whole company, and not of the laying on of handes, which made not biſhops, but ſent them into

their possession after they had made them: we may more truly affirme with the Apostle, that the holy Ghost by the voices of the children themselues, made the fathers, and not the bishops.

An other of his reasons is, a deprauing of places alleaged out of Paul, that the Church being new borne, bishops could not be so established euerywhere at the first, as is to be seene in the election of Deacons. Whom yet can Epiphanius perswade, that it was for want of fit men onely, that there were many bishops in euery Church? For that which not onelye Hierome, but Epiphanius against the Miletians also reporteth, concerning them of Alexandria: that is, Alexandria neuer had two bishops, as the other cities, vpon what ground the men of Alexandria did it, & folowed not the examples of other churches, let them see to it.

Oupote Alexandri duo episcopous eichos kai alli poleis.

Finally, that this kind of bishop, which who so beareth it, is not the first in order amongst his felow elders, but in degree aboue them, beyng the onely man in his diocesse, is not ordeined by the

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word of God, but by cuſtome amongſt the fathers Hierome witneſſeth, as very many others long ſince haue obſerued: For theſe are his woordes in his epiſtle to Euagrius.

The Apoſtle (ſaieth hee) doeth teach plainely, that Elders and Biſhops are all one, &c. And where as one after was choſen to bee ſet ouer the reſt, that (ſaith he) was a remedy found out for remedy of ſchiſme, that euery one drawyng Chriſt vnto himſelfe, myght not rend the Church in ſunder. For at Alexandria alſo from the tyme of Marke the Euangeliſt, to the tyme of Heraclea and Dionyſius the Biſhop, the Elders placed one in a high degree or place, choſen by themſelues, whom they called a biſhop. Moreouer, vppon the firſt to Titus. An Elder and a Biſhop (ſaith hee) is all one, and before by the inſtigation of the deuill, there was pertakyng in religion, it was ſayd amongeſt the people: I am of Paule, of Apollos, and of Cæphas: the Churches were gouerned by the common aduiſe of the Elders. But after that euery one imagi-

imagined, that thoſe whome he baptiſed were his owne, and not Chriſtes: it was decreed throughout the whole world, that one choſen of the Elders, ſhoulde bee ſet aboue the reſt; vnto whome all the care of the church might appertayne, to the takyng away of the ſeedes of contentions. And a little after, As the Elders knowe that they are ſubiect by the cuſtome of the Churche to the Biſhop that is ſet ouer them: ſo let the Biſhops knowe, that they are greater then the Elders, rather by cuſtome, then by any vertue of the Lordes appoyntment. Yea and Auguſtine alſo in his 19. epiſtle ſaieth, that according to the titles of honor, which the vſe of the Church hath gotten, the office of a biſhop is greater then the office of an Elder.

Chryſoſtome alſo witneſſeth, vpon the firſt to Timothie and the 3. chapter, That the Biſhops differ from the Elders onely in ordinatiõ; that is (as Theophilact ſpeaketh more plainly) in the onely ceremonie of conſecration. Theodoret writing vpon the ſame place, ſaith, That

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in olde tyme they called the ſame men Elders and Biſhops, as though forſooth the thing it ſelfe had then bene onely called by another name, and goeth about to prooue that, becauſe Paule calleth Epaphroditus the Apoſtle of the Philippians. This is of no weight at all. The names which are giuen of fellow labourer, and fellow ſouldiour, do declare that he was no biſhop in this kind of biſhop, but an Euangeliſt tied to no one citie, much leſſe to a dioceſſe, of the number of thoſe, whome the Apoſtles did keepe, to ſend to and fro, at the motiō of the ſpirit of God. The councell of Nice alſo, diſputing about the degrees of biſhops, alleageth ancient cuſtomes, whereof we minde to ſpeake anon. And where as Cyprian not in one place, calleth the biſhops ſucceſſors of the Apoſtles, whoſe authoritie is from God; and if we take it ſo, as though by the very commandement of God, theſe biſhops are the ſame, that in tyme paſt the Apoſtles, the thing it ſelfe doth refute that, ſeeyng there was alwayes a certain portion aſſigned to euery biſhop. But the'

Apoſtles

Apoſtles, by the direction of the ſpirite rite of God, though not confuſedlie, did exerciſe their miniſtery throughout the whole worlde. But if this be true, there ſhould haue beene more biſhops, in the Church of Rome it ſelfe: namely Peter and Paul, which yet afterwards was counted peculiar to one. And ſurely, ther cannot be mo, the cheefe in one and the ſame company at one time. And whereas the name of Byſhops, is ſayd of the Apoſtleſhip. Acte. 1.20. It maketh nothing to the matter, except a man by a like reaſon woulde haue the Deacons to haue bin Apoſtles, becauſe Paul calleth his Apoſtleſhip a Deaconſhip or miniſtery. But we are to looke into that alſo, that Hierome mighte ſeeme to be of the mind, that this kinde of Byſhop begun thē, when as ſchiſmes aroſe vp in the Church. That this is not ſo, we may gather out of Paul him ſelf, who of purpoſe writing to the Corinthians about the ſame matter, doth not onely paſſe ouer this remedy: but alſo as foreſeeing ſuch a matter, doth in the title of the epiſtle, ioyne vnto him ſelfe

Diaconian

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Sosthenes, to teach by his example how carefully this Primacie is to be auoyded in assemblies of the Church, who (it is euident were not onely the first in order next vnto Christ, but also highest in degree) did execute their ministerie in common. Wherefore, no not the same Paule alone would excommunicate the incestuous persons by his Apostolicall authoritie, but by the authoritie of the whole Eldership, neither doeth Peter doubt to call himselfe fellow elder.

Sunpresbuteron.

Nay this is so farre off from being any good remedy, from staying of schismes, that contrarywise there was neuer more bitter contention in the Church, then about this primacie which had neuer come to passe, if this preheminence aboue their fellowes had bene forbidden, or rather, if men had neuer brought it in. Whereupon we conclude, that this kind of bishop which is not of order, but of superioritie, was brought in of man, & as Hierome saith Tit. 1. by litle & litle, & that so as he is in deede thought, that the planets of dissentions might be thereby plucked vp, all the care was

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committed to one man.

And whereas he sayth in the same place, that it was decreed thoroughout all the world: We are to vnderstand it no otherwise, then of a priuy custome, brought in by little & little. And what soeuer is found in Ignatius, or other ancient Writers, when the byshop of Sathan was not yet found out, touching the authority of the byshops or ouerseers (as Iustin speaketh) is to be vnderstood of this kind of Bishop.

THE BISHOP OF THE *Deuill.*

THus also we describe the bishop of the deuill: that euen as that kind of bishop ordained of God, degenerated by litle and litle, into an humane ordinance, whereof we intreated in the second place: so this of the deuill, against which we now labour, is sprouted forth of the corruptiō of the bishop brought in by man. Of this intollerable corruption there are foule, most manifest, and vndoubted markes. Some of this kinde

of biſhops haue wholy ſingled themſelues from the Elderſhips, ſo that they haue nothyng to do with them: Some haue wholy aboliſhed them. And that they haue chalenged vnto themſelues, and I knowe not to what Officials the whole guidance of the church, & chiefly the authoritie to elect, to depoſe, and to excommunicate: ſo as they not onely are aboue others, but as it were alone do exerciſe Lordſhip ouer Gods heritage, contrary to the expreſſe inhibition of Peter.

That alſo they haue inuaded vppon temporall dominions, contrary to the flat commaundement of Chriſt. And that they will not onely be preſent, but alſo Preſident in cauſes of this lyfe, and affaires of the Common wealth, the cōmandement of the Apoſtle to the contrary notwithſtandyng, 2. Tim. 2. 1. Cor. 6. yea and that of Chriſt himſelfe, Luke 13. 14.

That alſo they waſte in riot & ſtatelineſſe agaynſt conſcience and al ſhame, the goods conſecrate to holy vſes.

That alſo they haue tied the ſpirit of God

God to certaine places and persons, as though the bishop of the more noble place, must needes haue necessary giftes aboue the rest: or as though hee, who now is most fit, must needs be so alwais.

And last of all, that they are the image of that beast which is described, Apoc. 13. as Pope Anacletus hymselfe witnesseth, epist. 2. in as much as they are distinguished among themselues, by those their thrones and degrees, according to the paterne of the Roman Empire. The Apostle, Act. 20. 19. foretold of this Hierarchie, as they terme it, of the false bishop, which in tyme became an Antichristian primacie. And in the 3. Iohn 9. it is most manifest, that Sathan begun euen then to lay the foundation of this mysterie.

Now out of the history of the Nicene Councell, which otherwise touching doctrine was euery where receyued, it is cleare how foule dissentions were euen then, of orderyng the bonds betweene the bishops, the fountaines whereof they were so farre from dammyng vp, that pretending auncient cu-

ſtoms, they confirmed the Patriarkſhip, and made a way for the horrible Papacie of Rome then ſlidyng on, and vnderlayd the ſeate for the harlot that ſitteth vpon ſeuen mountaines. But farre be it of, that theſe things, although they haue their auncient and great authoritie, ſhould be preiudiciall to the deuine and Apoſtolicall writings, according to the rule, whereof there is no wiſe man will doubt, that the Councels thẽſelues are to be ſquared.

And to what purpoſe ſhould I confute that agreemẽt betweene the prieſthood of the Leuites, & of Chriſt, which ſome old writers alleage to prooue this diueliſh oligarche, and at the length euẽ playne tiranny. In deede it is euident, that the high prieſt was a figure of Chriſt himſelfe, whoſe ſecond image if we graunt that the biſhops are, it wil folow, that there are as many images of Chriſt, as there be biſhops, in as much as there is none aboue him. But contrarywiſe, no biſhop hath bene the image of Chriſt. Beſides, biſhops are not heds of the vniuerſall Church, but of their owne

owne perticular: Nay, no heads at all, in as much as the Biſhops are vnder Archbiſhops, the Archb. vnder Patriarkes, and they agayne vnder the Pope, that is not vnder the true figure, but the counterfet figure of Chriſt. Now ſeeing that our onely hed is taken vp into heauen, a ſucceſſor for whom liuyng for euer, we are not to ſeeke: who ſeeth not that the elders ordayned by the law of God, come in the roume of the prieſtes of the lawe, and the Deacons to anſwer to the Leuites?

The firſt queſtion.

Seeyng that there are ordayned in ſeuerall Churches, ſeuerall paſtors and miniſters, and the authority of all Chriſtes miniſters in the Church ſeeme to be equall: Whether the office of the biſhops be neceſſary in the church to procure meetings when occaſion ſerueth, admiſſion to the miniſterie, and remouuyng from the place vpon iuſt cauſes: or whether all the miniſters hauyng equall authoritie, and not vnder the au-

thoritie of any ſuperiour biſhop, ought to chuſe fit men with the conſent of the Patron who enioyeth the benefice, and the people thẽſelues, as alſo to correct & remoue frõ the charge. And the maners of the people thẽſelues, who can hardly or not at all be kept in obedience without the bridle of the biſhops authority, which may runne through in viſityng of the Churches of the prouince, may put vs in mynd to retaine ſuch biſhops. Againe, ſo often as there ſhalbe dealing in matters touchyng the ſafetie of the common wealth in the ſolemne aſſemblies of the land, accordyng to the laws which the kingdome hath of a long vſe and cuſtome receiued, there can be nothing eſtabliſhed without the biſhops, who haue the third roume and place in the kingdome, which to take away, or wholy to put downe, would bee very dangerous to the Common wealth.

The anſwer to the firſt queſtion.

Where as Sathans biſhop hath bene the ouerthrowe of the Church and all Chriſtian kingdomes, whoſe head is the

the Romaine Antichriſt, it is to be looked vnto of all handes, eſpecially of all godly princes, that they at once aboliſh it, if they minde the reformation of the Church, and their owne ſafetie. As for the biſhop ordained by mā, & brought into the Churche by little and little, whereby Sathan made him a waye for greater thinges, it had beene tolerable, ſo that with all the ancient good lawes prouidyng for the reſiſting of the gouernyng by ſome few, had bene in their former force agayne. But beſides, that the ſtate of the world being quite changed, experience of ſo many ages doeth teach vs too well, that vnleſſe this roote alſo be plucked vp, it wil come to paſſe, that the ſame fruite will ſprout and bud forth again. Finally, ſeing the Lord hath ſo oftē decided this cōtrouerſie of ſuperiority among his own diſciples, that he ſhut it cleane out, ſeing the rule both for doctrine & good order of the Church, is to bee ſought for out of the very writings of the apoſtles: & it is manifeſted, the churches thē proſpered, whē all this authoritie of one man ouer the reſt, yet

was not, but as that grew vp, ſo al things fell to decay. Finally, ſeeyng where the remnants of this gouernment by a few, are not cleane taken away, the woorke of the Lord, is openly hindered: Our iudgement is, that after the chaſing away of this deuiſe of man, the churches ſhall be wel prouided for, if they may be repaired according to the writynges of the Apoſtles. And the reformation as it ſemeth to vs, conſiſteth herein, that firſt the whole kingdome is to bee deuided into regions. Agayne, the regions into pariſhes, either of Cities or countrey townes: that in places moſt fit, and of greateſt aſſembly, be placed paſtors, beyng lawfully propounded by the company of their owne elders, to the kinges chriſtiã maieſtie, or the deputies therof, and allowed of all. Laſtly, beyng receyued of their own people, ouer whõ they are to be ſet, they be placed, promulgation hauing gone before: and that in euery pariſh the paſtour may haue with hym fit men to aſſiſt him, who alſo may, beyng watchfull, ſalue vp the offences not ſo waighty, leauyng the other of grea-

greater importance, to the whole eldership. Also, that eldership made of the pastors of parishes, both of citie & cuntry, and a sufficient number of men approoued for their godlines & wisedom, lawfully also chosen, as is aforesayd, bee placed in most fitte places, who assemblyng at a certaine tyme and place, may determine of the Church-affayres, of their owne gouernment, accordyng to the prescript lawes, first set downe in a generall councell, and afterward confirmed by the authoritie of the soueraigne maiestie.

In this company let there be chosen by common voyces, one first in order not superior in authoritie, who shall be thought most fit, and that without making choyse of any certaine place, & but for a certaine tyme. After the expiryng whereof, either let another bee chosen, or els the same man is to be established agayne for another tyme by a new consent: whose office is to make report of the common affaires to the company, to demaund their iudgements, and to giue sentence by the iudgement of the

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elderſhip, hauing no authority giuē him ouer his felows, to whō rather he is moſt ſubiect. In this aſſembly let nothyng be debated of beſides maters of conſciēce, & that by the word of god, & the lawes of church diſcipline eſtabliſhed, drawen out of the worde of God, not one whit medling with the authority of the ciuil magiſtrate. And let the ſoueraign maieſty & the lawfull magiſtrate thereby appointed, be keepers of this order, & the puniſher of thoſe that ſeditiouſly rage againſt it. But if any ſhal imagin that this ſodain aboliſhing of both theſe biſhops will miniſter occaſion of new ſtirres, although we ſee not with what conſciēce the biſh. may ſo chalenge to themſelues the goods of the church, or els call thēſelues biſhops, & liue like princes of this world: yet for to keep the cōmon peace, the ſoueraigne maieſty may leaue vnto thē, which are now biſhops, their reuenues whole for their lyfe tyme, ſo they trouble not the well made order of the Church, with prouiding there be none choſen into their place, when they bee dead. As for the frowardnes of the people,

ple, it may be kept downe better a great deale by other reynes, then by the authoritie of a falſe named biſhop; as by preaching of the word of God, by cenſures of the church, and the authoritie of the magiſtrate of the cuntry, agaynſt the open troubles of the publike ſtate, either eccleſiaſtical or ciuil. The Churches may very wel be viſited at ſet times without any great coſt and biſhoplike pride, by thē whō euery elderſhip hath choſen vnder the K. maieſties authority which wil not be alwais neceſſary, if the elders do rightly execute their office.

This ſitting of the biſh. with the authority of the voice in the publike eſtates of the kingdom, came in with a manifeſt abuſe, cōtrary to the word, & therfore in our mind is to be vtterly aboliſhed. For the biſh. hath nothing to do in ordring of meer ciuil affairs: yet foraſmuch as in ſuch aſſemblies, eſpecially ſome things many times happen, belonging to the eſtabliſhing of the eſtate, & order of the churches: the kepers wherof the godly magiſtrates ought to be, & not the ouer turners, as we are taught by the exāple

of

of holy kings. It is very neceſſary, that as often as the meetinges of the land are proclaymed, intelligence thereof be giuen to the chiefe elders, who may bee preſent in the behalfe of their ſeignories, yet not ſittyng as iudges, but dealing about matters of the church onely with the eſtates of the land, as their elderſhips haue giuen them in charge, except the ſtates thinke good vpon extraordinary occaſion, that they aske counſell of God about ſome other affaires alſo. If alſo the kinges Maieſtie thinke good to admit into counſell amongeſt the paſtors or elders, one, who ſhall bee thought to be wiſe and experienced in things, he may admit him, though not as a paſtor or elder, yet as a citizen. And it were iniurious to remooue from their office in the Church, the paſtours, and much leſſe the Elders and Deacons, otherwiſe laymen frō that degree, which they hold as citizens, either in the common wealth, or in the aſſemblies. But the kings maieſty, and all the Princes & Lordes, are to be exceedyng wary, that they make not courtlike gouernours of

their

their pastors, to the great endamagyng of the Church, as we haue a faire example in Eusebius of Nicomedia in the court of Constantine. As for the right of the patronage, least some man should say, that it was gotten for himselfe. Our iudgement is, that it may be concealed, but not without some conditiõs: namely, that he which shall be chosen by the free voyces of the eldership, should beeoffred by the Patrone to the kings maiestie, beyng also to set vpon his charge, after the consenting of his flocke.

The second question.

After that religion is reformed, it hath bene a receiued custome that the bishops, and of the ministers, pastors & elders, so many as should be sent of the bishops, should assemble themselues, that they together with the chiefe Barons and nobles which professe the true religion, might make enquirie after the doctrine and maners of euery one. But seeyng the prince himselfe is a louer of the true religion, it is a question whether

ther there may be ſuch an aſſembly with out the conſent or commandement of the prince. Whether the miniſters alone may meete as often as they will. Laſt of all, whether the nobles and other godly men & elders, (which are yeerely choſen with vs out of the people and nobilitie together) may lawfully or expediently come without the cõmandement of the king to ſuch aſſemblies. Which aſſembly of the nobles and people, ſeemeth to ſome altogether needles vnder a godly prince, either becauſe it hath not long ſince ben receyued by a meere cuſtome without any law, and that vnder a prince, who then reſiſted the religion, whereby ſuch aſſemblies myght haue the greater authoritie: or els becauſe it may ſeeme dangerous, if ſo many nobles aſſemble ſo oftẽ, without the conſent of the king, they may ſomtimes conſult of ſome thing els beſides religion.

Others thinke that this aſſemblie is in no caſe to bee refuſed, but rather that it is very needefull that the Nobles and other religious men be preſent as

helpers

helpers to their ministers in the assembly, bearyng witnesse of their lyfe and the peoples behauiour, otherwyse it will after come to passe, that if an impious prince raign afterward, that neither ministers may safely assemble, neyther can the determination be put in execution without the consent, helpe & ayde of the nobles.

To the second question.

Councels are necessarye in the Church for many causes, both to the retayning of agreement, and also to the seeking of remedies by common aduise for the daungers which fall out. And last of all, to take order for those that rest not in the iudgement of perticular seignories, if they thinke they haue any iniurie done them. And these Councels are eyther of a whole nation, or of some one Region or Prouince (or Dioceese as they haue begun to speake after the description of the Prouinces of Rome) deuided into many Seigniories.

It

It is neceſſary that the Councels of the prouinces be deuided for many cauſes, & except there be other vrgent cauſes, they would be appoynted rather euery halfe yeere then quarterly, leaſt in diſcourſing of matters, they ſpende the tyme in vayne. And it will bee beſt for the auoyding of ambition, that the Councell be not alwayes aſſembled in the ſame place of euery prouince: but as ſoone as one halfe yeeres Synode is diſcuſſed, it may be determined by cōmon conſent, where ſhal be the place of the next followyng. It will be very well that two of euery ſeignorie of the prouince, choſen by common voyces, and ſent with ſome commiſſion, be preſent at theſe councels: one a paſtor, and the other an Elder or a Deacon. Neyther would we haue any ſtrife about ſitting, who ſhould ſitte firſt or laſt, but euery one to ſit, as it ſhall fall out without any contention, and the iudgement to bee giuen as any one ſhall ſit.

Now, he that ſhal gouern the whole action, who was choſen for this one thing by common conſent of voyce, the chiefe

chiefe paſtor of the place, beyng in the beginning Preſident, which office ſhall end, when the Councell ſhall be ended. There are no matters in queſtion to bee propounded to theſe Councels to take knowledge of, but ſuch as are more ſpiritual & belong to that prouince, where they are to be decided without appeale by the word of God, & the rules there ſet downe, without any brabling or diſturbance of the company. Yet if any great priuate controuerſie ſhall fall out in the prouinciall Synode, where ſome may thinke that he hath cauſe to complayne of iniury done vnto him, he may put vp his complaint to be decided in a generall councel, whē it ſhalbe thought good to aſſemble it.

Furthermore it is chiefly required, that if all the lawes of the Church be eſtabliſhed of the kings chriſtian maieſty: it foloweth, that the Councels are to be aſſembled by his commandement and direction, and not otherwiſe. Neither yet is there a new commiſſion euery tyme to be ſought for of the king for that purpoſe, ſeeyng his maieſty hath

once eſtabliſhed a law touching the ſet tymes of ordinary Synodes. But yet if there ariſe iuſt cauſe of ſuſpition of hād-ling in theſe metings, other matters be-ſides meere eccleſiaſticall, it ſhall be ſafe for the kings maieſty to ſend one of his ſubiects whō he will, to diſgrace by his preſence the meeting of the Synodes: where yet he is not to be as a iudge, ex-cept ſome thing fall out where it is ne-ceſſary that the authoritie of the ciuill magiſtrate be put betweene.

A generall councel of the land is not to be aſſembled but vpon great cauſes, which ſeeyng they agree not with ſet tymes, it followeth, that they are not to bee ſtanding neither: but as often as ſome thing ſhall ſeeme to fall out of ſo great waight, either in doctrine or in go-uernment of the church, as cannot well be decided but in a generall meeting, that prouince is to be carefull, to put o-ther prouinces in mind concerning that matter, in theſe halfe yeeres Synodes: that with the conſent of all, or the grea-ter part, they go vnto the kings maieſty, who (as being a chriſtiā prince, is to de-

ſire

ſire nothing more, then the peace of the churches) ought without any ſtay or doubting, at the ſuite of the Churches, to appoint a place and tyme for a general meeting, as the need of the churches ſhal require. And the ſame order may ſeeme to be kept in the generall Councels, which is in the prouincial, whether before the kings maieſty himſelfe, as in ſome general councels, the emperors of Rome haue bene preſent, or before the honorable lordes of the kings maieſtie. And laſt of all, whatſoeuer ſhal be alowed by the common conſent of the Synode, ſhall be confirmed by the kinges maieſties expreſſe authoritie, after the example of the godly Emperours.

The third queſtion.

Whether the king or the biſhops are to call the aſſembly of the Church, and as concernyng what matters they may make lawes.

To the third queſtion.

Wee haue aunſwered the firſt part

of this queſtion already. To the ſecond we anſwere. Firſt it is not lawful, no not for the angels themſelues, to make any lawes for the conſciẽce, but the church is to be vpholden by thoſe which the Lord hath enacted, ſeeyng we are now to looke for no newe reuelation, the whole counſell of God touchyng our ſaluation, being fully & perfectly made manifeſt. Our iudgement alſo is, that the diſcipline or good order is to bee ſought for out of the word of God, and to be kept inuiolable, as the ſecond part of chriſtian doctrine. Yet there remayneth two things, wherof there may, yea and there ought to be lawes ſet downe in the Church. For firſt of all, where as euery thyng is not expreſſely and in ſo many wordes ſet downe in the writings of the Prophetes and Apoſtles: therefore in controuerſies both concerning doctrine and the ſubſtaunce of Church diſcipline, the Councell ought to comprehend the decidyng of them in vnfallible and plaine heads, as by certayne rules, like as it was done profitably in thoſe right approoued Councels

both

both Oecumenie & perticulars, againſt the blaſphemy of the heretikes, and the malipertneſſe of the diſordered. And where as there come many queſtions in the ſeignories, eſpecially when there is dealing about mariages, though there cannot be certaine rules ſet downe touching them out of the worde of God: yet ſo neere as may be, rules drawn out of the comparing of the ſcriptures, are to be ſet downe, after which they may be decided: yet is neither any thing take from the word of God, by the puttyng to of this, ſo it be rightly done. But this is rather an interpretation of the worde of God, & a declaring how one foloweth vpon another. Agayne, where the ſubſtance both of doctrine and eccleſiaſticall diſcipline abideth whole and vnchangeable: yet muſt the outward circumſtances of the order needs be changed, for the ſame reaſon of the perſon & places, abideth not alwayes. For we ſee the Apoſtles loue feaſtes taken away, & the decrees touching bloud, and that which was ſtrangled. The gouernors of the church are to prouide alſo, that all

may haue intelligence, at what tyme & place it is expedient for any thing to be done in the Church: yet ſo as the doctrine it ſelfe, vnder which we alſo comprehend the ordaining of the ſacramẽts, abide whole as God hath ſet it downe. Further, that in ſetting down the lawes of this order, there be ſet down nothing fooliſh or vnprofitable, much leſſe any of the old cuſtomes retained, which either is already ſtained with ſuperſtition, or which may eaſily make a way to ſuperſtition. Laſtly, that in all theſe, there be a great regard of ſimplicitie, and that the church be not loaded with a multitude of rules.

And for the auoyding of the diuerſitie of rites, it is neceſſary that theſe Canons, as in olde tyme they called them, be ſet downe in their generall counſels, that any thing in the ſame land may be chaunged according to the tyme. But whatſoeuer ſhall be ſet downe in thoſe counſels, is to be eſtabliſhed by the authoritie of the kings Chriſtian maieſtie, as next after God, the keper and defender of the churches.

The

The fourth queſtion.

Whether the papiſtes are to be excommunicate as Apoſtates, or vtter fallers away, or to be puniſhed with ſome ſmaller puniſhment.

To the fourth queſtion.

We ſee not what ſword of excommunication may be drawen out againſt thoſe men, who though they were ſet into the church by no vaine baptiſme: yet neuer entred into the fellowſhip of the pure church. Yea the doores are alwayes to ſtand opē that they may come to heare the word of God, and they are carefully to be allured thether, if at any tyme (as the Apoſtle ſaith) they may repent and get out of the ſnare of the deuill, of whom they are holden captiue. But if any ſhalbe thought to ſinne in an open contempt, our iudgement is, that it ought wholy to bee put ouer to the chriſtiā magiſtrate. We thinke that it beſeemeth a Chriſtian magiſtrate to deale much by lenitie in the matter of religiō towards his ſubiects, not being troubleſome ſectaries, & ſuch as of knowledge blaſpheme.

The

The fift queſtion.

For what cauſe may any be excommunicated. As put caſe one kill a man, ſaying, he did it by chaunce, or of ſome neceſſitie for his owne ſafetie, and is redy to be iudged about that matter, not yet accuſed either of the king or of the neighbours of him that is killed: Whether may the Church make inquirie of the fact, whether it wer done of trecherie, or by chance, or of neceſſity, & compell the manſlear to profeſſe repentance openly in the church, or to excommunicate him if he refuſe.

To the fift queſtion.

No man earneſtly repenting, is to be excommunicate, but after repentaunce, rather ought to bee receiued. And the cauſe of excommunication ought to be moſt waighty & a publike offence, ſeing that onely the extremitie of the diſeaſes muſt haue extreme remedies. Yet may ſuch men after the thing be knowen, be ſuſpended from receiuyng the Lordes ſupper (they were woont to cal ſuch mé reſtrai-

reſtrained) for whom this is thought to be a neceſſary remedy, that for the greatnes of their offence, they may be an example to others, or that their repentãce doth ſtand in need of triall. As for the preſent queſtion. If the magiſtrate put in minde of his duety, doe winke at ſuch faults, and yet it be probable, that none is raſhly accuſed: Wee thinke that the Elderſhip may call him forth, and there as the matter ſhal require, to exhort him to the acknowledging of the offence: which if ye ſhall deny, he is to be left to the iudgement of God, neither are the Elders to proceede any further in the hearing of witneſſes.

The ſixt queſtion.

Where as in the former age much wealth hath bene giuen by princes and many other, to the biſhops, monaſteries &c. vnder the name of almes, & ſo great riches ſeeme rather to hurt the biſhops, then to do them good: and monaſteries in the church and common wealth are vnprofitable: what yet ſhould become

of

of ſuch goods which were once conſecrate to the church? For ſeeing the Biſhops and miniſters haue ſufficient of their tithes, whereof they may liue well and honeſtly, can the prince with the conſent of the ſtates of the kingdome, turne the reſidue eyther to his priuate vſe, or the good of the commō wealth, eſpecially ſeeyng ſuch goods do conſiſt not onely in tithes, but of poſſeſſions, both in the country & the city. Which queſtion, ſeeing it ſeemeth to bee rather ciuil then eccleſiaſticall, I purpoſed not to trouble you in this point. But whereas many both learned & godly amōgſt vs, are of this minde, that thoſe thinges which haue bene once vowed to holy vſes, cannot be giuen to prophane vſes, though they be publike, I could not but mention the matter vnto you.

To the ſixt queſtion.

Cōcerning the goods of the church. Firſt of all we ſuppoſe great heed ought to be taken, that none do ſtaine himſelf with handling the church goods. For if God hath taken reuenge of ſuch ſacri-

leges,

leges, euen amongst the very idolaters: what trow we will his iudgement be against thē which haue spoiled his churches, and haue prophaned the thinges which were set a parte for his true worship.

Moreouer it is euident, that this turneth greatly to the reproch of the name of God and of his holy gospel, as thogh forsooth papistry hath ben abandoned, not for the loue of the truth, but to rob the church of her goods, and as though new theeues haue entered in the roume of the olde. Nowe, euen as aboundaunce doth ouerwhelme the Church, so it is to be feared, least she be brought into great straights by want, whilest many now a daies are no lesse sparyng and niggardly in vpholding the true ministerie, then heretofore kinges and princes themselues haue beene ouerlauishyng: we thinke it needefull to keepe a meane in this poynte, which so wee take will be the best, if first a view be taken of the daily expences which are necessary to be made: then if somwhat be laid vp for many thinges extraordinary,

where

wheras no iuſt reckoning can be made, and both of theſe be accounted not ſparingly or ſlenderly, but bountifully and liberally, ſeeyng that the Church by the goodnes of God hath plenty. Therfore that number is to bee made of pariſhes and paſtors which may very well ſuffiſe the people, and euery one is to haue an honeſt liuing allowed. Order alſo is to be taken for the elders, who are to aſſiſt the paſtors that they may conueniently diſcharge their duety. It would be alſo iniurious, that the widowes and childrē of the paſtors which are dead, ſhould be brought to beggery, who in a care of their calling, were conſtrained to lay aſide the care of prouiding for their familie. Schooles alſo and vniuerſities, ſeing they are the Seminary of the church are not the leaſt part of the care thereof. Care alſo is to bee had of almes houſes & hoſpitals, & of churches, that they be kept in reparations, and new builded if need require. Laſt of all (as I ſay before) ſeeyng the churches haue plenty, order muſt be taken, what ſhal be brought into the Church treaſury yeerely, from whence

whẽce may be fetched that which may ſuffiſe in tyme of warre or famine, leaſt then it be to ſeeke when it ſhould be in a readineſſe. When all theſe things ſhall faithfully & frankly be brought by ſupputation into one ſumme ſtill yeerely: Good and ſufficient men are to take order for their collecting, ſuch a way as ſhall be without trouble or ſtrife. That which ſhall be found to be ouerplus, is not to be lauiſhed out with other publike reuenues, but to be layed vp by it ſelfe (for theſe are of an other nature, though not alwayes gottẽ after the honeſteſt ſort by the couetous prieſts) and we thinke that it may be taken & beſtowed for the ſeruice of the kingdome, when the publike neceſſitie thereof doth require it, eſpecially if the people be ſo much the more eaſed.